

For Immediate Release**Saath-Saath Project Hits Major Milestone, Distributes 100 Millionth Condom**

March 31, 2016, Kathmandu: Today, officials from the National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) distributed the 100 millionth condom that USAID-funded HIV projects – including the current Saath-Saath project – have cumulatively delivered in Nepal since 1993. Evidence shows that, globally, an estimated 50 million HIV infections have been averted through condom use since the 1980s.

USAID has a long history of consistent support to Nepal's health priorities, including its HIV program. USAID-funded projects, including the current Saath-Saath project, have contributed significantly to streamlining and standardizing the country's HIV prevention and care programs, improving the reach of treatment activities and increasing access and quality services to key populations. Through them, condom promotion and distribution free-of-charge, along with social marketing, have helped normalize the regular use of condoms among key populations and raised awareness about HIV. Correct and consistent condom use remains one of the most effective ways of averting new HIV/AIDS infections. In Nepal, such condom use has helped to decrease the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate from 0.52 percent (about 60,000 people) in 2003 to 0.20 percent (39,249 people) in 2014.

“Two decades of USAID's technical and financial support have pioneered evidence-based interventions that have saved lives and contributed to the health and well-being of people living with HIV,” states Shanda Steimer, USAID's Acting Mission Director. “USAID would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Nepal, partners and stakeholders for your commitment to the 90:90:90 by 2020 targets and collectively working toward an AIDS-free generation.”

Nepal's HIV epidemic is mainly driven by heterosexual transmission and is concentrated among certain key populations such as sex workers, migrants and people who inject drugs. Through the use of condoms distributed by the Ministry of Health, USAID, other External Development Partners, and NGOs, Nepal has made remarkable progress in reducing the HIV prevalence over the last decade.

Satish Pandey, the Saath-Saath Project Chief of Party states, “Condom promotion and use is widely acknowledged as one of the most effective tools for HIV prevention. A condom is the only tool that can effectively prevent HIV, sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy. If used correctly and consistently, condoms are proven to be 98 percent effective in preventing HIV and STIs. We are thrilled to hit this 100 million milestone.”

Table 1: Number of Condoms Distributed through USAID-supported Projects

Project Name	Period	Districts	Condoms (in million)
AIDSCAP – 1	1993-1997	29 districts	15
AIDS CAP – 2	1997-2002	16 districts	44
Impact	2002-2006	28 districts	3
ASHA	2006-2011	30 districts	12
Saath-Saath Project	20011-2016	33 districts	26
Total			100